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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Forest Service Slows the Spread of Gypsy Moth

**Roanoke, Va.** – The USDA Forest Service and the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services will treat 33,885 acres of public and private land for gypsy moth infestations as part of the national Slow the Spread (STS) program. Treatment for Bland, Grayson, Smyth, and Tazewell Counties is scheduled to begin the week of June 17, 2013, and could take two to four days to complete depending on weather. The gypsy moth treatment is applied by aircraft flying approximately 150 feet above the tree tops over affected areas. Aircraft will be visible to the public during treatment dates.

The treatment affects the gypsy moth by emitting a scent that confuses the moths during mating. The pheromone flakes utilized in gypsy moth treatment pose no threat to other species, including humans. The Slow the Spread program targets areas ahead of the advancing front of the gypsy moth population. “Early detection and reduction of gypsy moth populations along the advancing front is the focus of the Slow the Spread program,” says Forest Service Entomologist, Donna Leonard. “The treatment prevents current infestations of gypsy moths from growing to outbreak levels.”

Approximately eight miles of the Appalachian Trail resides within the treatment area. Signs notifying hikers of the treatment project are posted along the Appalachian Trail prior to entering the treatment area. Treatments on National Forest System lands include 6,216 acres of wilderness in the Garden Mountain and Hunting Camp Creek Wildernesses. Maps of the treatment area can be found at [www.fs.fed.us/r8/gwj](http://www.fs.fed.us/r8/gwj).

Gypsy moth is a destructive forest pest that was accidentally introduced into the United States in 1869. Gypsy moth causes extensive tree mortality by feeding on over 300 species. Since 1970, 75 million acres have been affected by gypsy moth. Since the inception of the Slow the Spread program in 2000, the historical rate of 13 miles per year has been reduced to three miles per year. This reduction in spread will prevent infestation of more than 150 million acres over the next 20 years. To learn more about this program, visit the Slow the Spread website at: [www.gmsts.org/about.html](http://www.gmsts.org/about.html).

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